

## ABC NIGHTLINE

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KOPPEL: Good evening. I'm Ted Koppel, and this is Nightline. The world is at war. Forty-five nations are currently involved in war of one kind or another, and the number is growing. We'll examine what those figures tell us about the world of 1983 and what they may mean for the future. Also tonight we'll look at the debate in the National Council of Churches on whether to grant membership to a church serving the gay community, and two years after the attempt to kill the pope we'll look at what intelligence agencies know about the shooting and how they've used the event to further their own ends.

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KOPPEL: Gentlemen, thank you. In a moment, a report from Rome on how much has been accomplished and how much is still a mystery in the two-year-old investigation of the shooting of Pope John Paul II.

Two years ago Mehmet Ali Agca tried to kill the pope. How he came to do it, at whose urging, with whose assistance and to what larger end--those questions are still snarled in controversy, but, as Bill Blakemore reports now, those who've been covering the story have been dealt a fascinating and frequently conflicting variety of stories.

BLAKEMORE: On May 13, 1981, Mehmet Ali Agca did something very easy. He shot the pope. He ran but was grabbed by onlookers who'd seen his gun go off. Another man was photographed racing from the scene. Four eyewitnesses said he also had a gun in his hand. John Paul was rushed to the hospital where he almost died, and the world naturally wondered had Agca acted alone as he had said? Was he as unbalanced as he appeared? Had big-power politics pushed him or some small group of fanatics? Three investigations began--by the intelligence services, by the Italian court of law and the by the journalists. The intelligence service from various countries, because it's their job, got deepest first and still know most, but it's not their job to tell each other or the public anything nor necessarily the truth when they do, rather to defend and advance the interests of their different governments. We cannot know for sure what any of them know, though a bit of it made its way into the semi-public Italian court procedure. In the trial the judge said there were signs of some vast conspiracy. The investigating magistrate began to work on Agca, who began to talk, and this Turk was arrested in Switzerland, who admits he brought Agca the gun, and this Turk in West Germany, who admits he gave Agca money. Now in Italian jails, they say they know nothing about shooting the pope. Then 18 months after the crime, Agca said more, and this Bulgarian official was arrested in Rome. The Italian court also wanted to arrest more Bulgarians Agca said had helped him, and this Turkish businessman Agca said had promised him \$1 million to do it, but these three were all back in Bulgaria. Shown the fleeing man, Agca said it was one of the Bulgarians. Shown there was little resemblance, he changed and said it was a close Turkish friend whom he'd never name. The Italian court thinks it's this man, \*Oral Chellink, Agca's missing boyhood friend. They've issued a warrant. The journalists began, as always, by picking up crumbs, matching rumors, bothering judges and stalking spooks. High Vatican sources told reporters off the record they had no doubts the KGB did it, that the Polish pope, champion of Solidarity, had been too great a danger for Moscow. American intelligence nudged several reporters to keep looking eastward. In late '81 a British documentary claimed a Bulgarian connection. Agca had said he got his false passport there. Reader's Digest in '82 expanded this, said the KGB did it, or almost certainly. Other reports in Europe and elsewhere, forgetting that motive is never proof, published partially fanciful tales of Agca in Tehran and Lebanon, Moscow and Libya, which read like bad spy fiction, and when Agca's own story, that Bulgarians had helped him shoot John Paul, was leaked from the courts, speculation soared. The Bulgarians invited the international press to their capital for an extraordinary news conference, where all those Agca accused protested their innocence, but four Italian